

Assisted Travel from September 2020 Frequently Asked Questions

Following the government announcement that all school pupils are expected to return to school from September. These are the frequently asked questions relating to Assisted Travel from September based on government guidance.

THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS ARE BASED ON GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE ISSUED AS OF 2 JULY

1) What have you done to make sure Assisted Transport is safe for my child?

The London Borough of Sutton have issued all Assisted Transport providers with guidance based on government advice. The guidance includes a variety of infection control and amended operational measures. In addition, we have worked closely with other London boroughs to develop our approach to delivering Assisted transport from September and the LBS approach is in line with other boroughs across London.

In order to check transport providers are adhering to these guidelines there are increased spot checks and quality assurance visits planned for September.

2) Will my driver and passenger assistant be the same people as before the schools closed?

We hope to keep the same driver and passenger assistant that you had before the schools closed but this might not be possible in all cases. The taxi and private vehicle industry has faced a number of challenges over the last 3 months and some drivers and passenger assistants will have left the industry to find work elsewhere. If there are any changes it will be detailed in your letter received by 24th August.

3) Will my child need to socially distance on transport?

Government guidance states that children should distance in vehicles "*where possible*". Social distancing will not be possible on the majority of transport routes due to the number of pupils requiring transport and the availability of vehicles. However the guidance does advise that pupils should be sat as far apart as space in the vehicle allows.

4) Will my child have to wear a face mask on the vehicle?

It is not necessary for your child to wear a mask on transport as this may cause some

children distress or make them anxious. If your child does want to wear a mask then this is OK too. You will need to provide a face mask for your child if this is the case.

5) What about drivers and passenger assistants, will they be wearing a face mask?

Drivers and Personal Assistants should wear a disposable face mask for the duration of the journey. If this is likely to make your child anxious, please take the opportunity to discuss this with your child/children and prepare them for the potential change.

6) My child's school is operating staggered start times, will my child's transport reflect the changed start times?

Unfortunately it will not be possible to organise transport around staggered start times. This is due to the number of children requiring transport and the availability of vehicles. If your child's school does decide to stagger start times they may need to have a process in place for receiving pupils on assisted transport who arrive at the same time.

7) My child's school is organising the children in bubbles (class bubbles or year group bubbles), will my child's transport reflect their bubble?

As with staggered start times, due to the number of children requiring transport (and the availability of vehicles), it will not be possible to organise assisted transport around class or year group bubbles.

Transport providers deliver to a number of neighbouring boroughs and there are a finite number of vehicles available to meet demand.

8) What else are you doing to reduce the risk of infection on transport?

The virus can be contracted through touch so we ask that you ensure your child washes their hands before leaving your house. Drivers and passenger assistants have been instructed to do the same.

Children should use hand sanitiser, if they are able to, when boarding and leaving the vehicle. Providers are required to hold sufficient quantities of hand sanitiser/wipes within vehicles to enable regular hand hygiene.

All vehicles, especially those parts where children will be seated will be cleaned before and after every journey with particular attention paid to door handles and safety rails that children may touch to support entry and exit to the vehicles.

9) What if I want my child to attend school but do not want them to travel on Assisted transport?

If you would prefer to take your own child to school you can get a Personal Travel Budget. If this is the case then will we give you a Personal Travel Budget of £0.45 per mile. If you would like to switch to a personal transport budget, please contact the Cognus Transport Team at SEN.Transport@cognus.org.uk

10) If I take a Personal Travel Budget does this mean I won't be able to change back in future when I am happy for them to travel on assisted transport again?

If you decide to take a Personal Travel Budget during the current circumstances, you can go back to the council arranging and providing assisted travel provision for you at any time. Please do ensure that you discuss this with the Cognus Transport team, as it is unlikely that last minute transport will be able to be arranged.

11) My child is worried and anxious about returning to school. Can they get support to help with their anxiety to help them return to school?

If your child is anxious and already has a therapist who they see then you should raise your concerns with them.

The Autism Service has put together a "A story on going back to school after lockdown" which explains to children how things might be different on their return to school. This can be found here:

<https://cognus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Going-back-to-school-after-closures.pptx>

12) My child and/or a member of our household is classed as 'clinically vulnerable' and has been shielding, I am worried that our child travelling on shared transport will put them at risk. How can the risk be reduced for them?

The infection control measures that have been put in place on Assisted Transport will vastly reduce the risk of spreading CV19. However if there is clinical evidence that your child should not use shared transport please discuss with the transport team.